

Statement of Governor Haley Barbour on President Bush's Federal Workforce Development Initiative

February 8, 2005

"I applaud President George W. Bush's proposal announced yesterday to overhaul the federal workforce development training programs. These proposals will help us build on the workforce reforms enacted last year in Mississippi. I agree with the President that we must have skilled workers if we are to continue to attract good jobs to Mississippi.

The President's reforms call for a consolidation of several programs and funding streams into a block grant option so states can eliminate costly and duplicative systems associated with each program. I welcome the opportunity to further consolidate workforce development programs including job training, services for displaced workers and vocational rehabilitation into an integrated workforce development system.

We need the ability to respond to changing economic and workforce needs here in Mississippi without being hampered by Washington's red tape. I urge Congress to pass this much needed reform as soon as possible."

#